

Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services CHILD CARE	Section: Serving the Family Subject: Absent Day Policies – Maintaining the Continuity of Care
--	--

Supersedes: Child Care 6-6 (9/1/06)

References: Sections 52-2-701-704, 52-2-711-713, 53-4-610 MCA;
Sections 37.80.101-103, 37.80.201-202, 37.80.205-206, 37.80.301-302,
37.80.305 -306, 37.80.315-316, 37.80.501 ARM
45 CFR Part 98

General Rule After the child care certification plan is issued, a family's schedule may vary. While a family's child care certification plan may be modified or terminated at any time, the following policies are useful in avoiding temporary gaps in eligibility and services to children. The policies can be grouped under the following intentions:

- ☐ Maintain Parent's Eligibility;
- ☐ Meet the Parent's Need for Additional Child Care; and
- ☐ Stabilize Child Care Arrangement.

While all of these policies benefit the family, some are focused on the needs of their child care providers who would not be available without adequate compensation. The relationship of the child with their provider depends on the stability of the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship. The CCR&R, the family, and the provider all have an interest in maintaining continuity of care during transition periods.

Absent Day Policies	Description & Requirements
Certified Enrollment Days – <i>Stabilize Child Care Arrangement</i>	Certified Enrollment (CE) is a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship benefit provided to the parent who is responsible for paying their child care provider when a child is temporarily absent from full-time care in a licensed or registered child care facility. Legally unregistered care does not qualify for this benefit. Part-time child care certification plans do not qualify for this benefit. Explained absence means that parent has stated or notified the provider why the

Montana Department of
Public Health & Human Services

Section:

Serving the Family

CHILD CARE

Subject:

Absent Day Policies –

Maintaining the Continuity of Care

Absent Day Policies	Description & Requirements
	<p>child is not in care, for example: sick child or family is on vacation.</p> <p>Unexplained absence means the child care provider does not know why the child is absent from care. The parent did not notify the provider as to why the child is absent.</p> <p>The following restrictions apply for Certified Enrollment days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The provider shall be licensed or registered. <input type="checkbox"/> The child shall be certified for full time care in the facility (30+ hrs/week on a regular basis). <input type="checkbox"/> Provider shall be open for business while the child is absent. <input type="checkbox"/> The provider must charge non-scholarship families when their children are absent. <input type="checkbox"/> CE hours claimed must reflect the time the child was scheduled to be in attendance. <input type="checkbox"/> The provider believes the child will return to the facility following the absence. <input type="checkbox"/> CE Hours are not to be claimed when a parent/child does not intend to return to the full time placement in the child care facility. <input type="checkbox"/> No more than 150 CE Hours may be claimed during one State fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). <input type="checkbox"/> CE Hours are converted to ‘Days’ in the same manner as hours are converted to full days. Ten CE Hours will be assessed for a full CE day of six to ten hours. <p>EXAMPLE: The parent tells the provider that the child will be gone for one week. It has been 10 days and the child has not returned. The provider contacts the CCR&R on the 10th absent day. The CCR&R cannot locate the family. The CCR&R sends a closure notice to the parent and to the provider. The CCR&R instructs the provider to charge CE days for the ten days of</p>

Montana Department of
Public Health & Human Services

Section:

Serving the Family

CHILD CARE

Subject:

**Absent Day Policies –
Maintaining the Continuity of Care**

Absent Day Policies	Description & Requirements
	<p>absences, when the provider believed the child would be returning to her care. The CCR&R pays the ten notice days as regular scheduled days according to the certification plan.</p> <p>EXAMPLE: On a Friday, the parent tells the provider that the child will be gone the next week. On Monday, the parent calls the CCR&R and notifies them of a change in providers. The original provider has billed ten CE days on the invoice. The CCR&R denies the ten CE days and notifies the provider that any notice requirement is between the parent and the provider.</p> <p>The provider claims Certified Enrollment hours on the invoice, when billing for absent time. CE hours are reported on the provider's monthly Statement of Remittance (SOR) and the parent's monthly Explanation of Benefits (EOB).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ When a child is certified for full time child care at one facility, CCUBS will automatically assign CE days to their record. ⇒ When a child is certified for full time child care, but the care is split between two facilities, and both facilities are owned by the same person or entity and both facilities are eligible for the Best Beginnings Scholarship program, the CCR&R will create only one certification plan to reflect full time child care in order for CCUBS to assign CE days. ⇒ The CCR&R will have to monitor the invoices so child care is being used appropriately. The CCR&R will offer technical assistance to the provider on a case-by-case basis in these instances. ⇒ The provider is still required to keep actual attendance records for both facilities, however only completes one invoice for the child each month, but comments where the child actually attended. ⇒ The CCR&R worker will case note the appropriate information.

Montana Department of
Public Health & Human Services

Section:

Serving the Family

CHILD CARE

Subject:

Absent Day Policies –

Maintaining the Continuity of Care

Absent Day Policies	Description & Requirements
	<p>EXAMPLE: A parent enrolls their child with one provider who has two separate facility sites. These two facilities even have separate provider numbers, but are under one umbrella federal EIN number, which can be validated on the organization screen in CCUBS. One of the sites provides child care on Monday – Friday, normal business hours, the other site provides child care on weekends and evenings. The parent works Wednesday – Sunday, a regular 8 hours a day. The CCR&R should set up a full-time certification plan for Wednesday – Sunday at one facility. This would allow the child to be eligible for certified enrollment days. All other certified enrollment restrictions apply. The provider is still required to keep actual attendance records at each facility site and note the invoice of where care was actually provided.</p>
<p>Hold-the-Slot - Stabilize Child Care Arrangement</p>	<p>In very limited, prior arranged situations, Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship payment can be paid to licensed or registered child care providers to hold a child care slot even though the child is not in attendance. The child's certified enrollment days must be used first.</p> <p>When a parent is between eligible activities or the child is temporarily absent, care may be certified to hold-the-slot, on a one-time basis for up to 30 days. A Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship payment can be authorized to pay the provider to hold-the-slot for a child only if the provider provides proof they would give the slot away to a specific family if the payment was not made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The provider must be licensed or registered. ❑ The child care provider provides a written-signed statement from the provider stating their policy to charge families when the child is absent. Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship payment will only be made if the provider charges non-scholarship families for the same service. ❑ The provider must make prior arrangements with the CCR&R to hold-the-slot during the temporary absence.

Montana Department of
Public Health & Human Services

Section:

Serving the Family

CHILD CARE

Subject:

**Absent Day Policies –
Maintaining the Continuity of Care**

Absent Day Policies	Description & Requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The child care provider provides a list of the children who would potentially fill the slot. ❑ The child must be enrolled full time at the facility (30 hrs. /week+) ❑ The child's certified enrollment days must be used before a provider may use hold-the-slot and any CE days used go towards the total 30 day allowance. ❑ The child's absence may not exceed 30 consecutive calendar days. ❑ Whether the child is in attendance or not, the parent is responsible to pay the provider the monthly co-payment. ❑ Hold-the-slot may not be used in consecutive periods. ❑ Hold-the-slot is not limited to 30 days total, in a calendar year. <p>EXAMPLE: A work-study college student has three weeks of the Christmas holiday off. The family leaves town, but the child care provider has another child on her waiting list, which might take that slot if the parent does not pay to reserve the slot. It is her policy to charge non-scholarship families whether the children are there or not. Certified enrollment days have been used. After getting proof of the provider's policy and the provider's waiting list, cover the three weeks if all other eligibility factors are met.</p> <p>When a parent and provider request to hold-the-slot, the CCR&R shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Have a copy of the provider's policy to charge for care when a child is absent. ⇒ Verify the full time child's certified enrollment days will be, or have been, used first. ⇒ Verify the provider has someone who would fill the slot if the child left the slot vacant. ⇒ Remind the parent that the co-payment is still payable when holding the slot. ⇒ Case note the arrangement before the hold-the-slot period begins.

Montana Department of
Public Health & Human Services

Section:

Serving the Family

CHILD CARE

Subject:

Absent Day Policies –

Maintaining the Continuity of Care

Absent Day Policies	Description & Requirements
Holidays – <i>Stabilize Child Care Arrangement</i>	<p>If licensed or registered providers charge all families for certain holidays, even though their facility is closed, providers may bill the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship on behalf of assisted families when a period of authorized child care falls on the observation of that holiday.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The provider shall be licensed or registered. ❑ The provider shall provide verification that they charge non-scholarship parents for the same service. ❑ The provider shall bill for the number of hours normally scheduled for that child on that day-of-the-week. ❑ The following holidays qualify under this benefit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Years Day Memorial Day Fourth of July Labor Day Thanksgiving Day Christmas Day ❑ If the holiday falls on a weekend, the provider may apply the holiday policy on the day that the State of Montana observes the holiday.
Suspending a Case – <i>Maintain Parent's Eligibility</i>	<p>When a family temporarily loses eligibility, the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship may be suspended for up to 30 days. The case remains open, however the scholarship is not paid. Following the suspension, the family may continue under current eligibility and the child care scholarship may continue. If the family loses eligibility past 30 days, close the case.</p> <p>EXAMPLE: The children of a household leave to visit their absent parent. This family's child care scholarship may be suspended for 30 days. If the children return within 30 days, the child care scholarship may be resumed. If the children are out of the household for more than 30 days, the child care scholarship shall be closed.</p>

Montana Department of
Public Health & Human Services

Section:

Serving the Family

CHILD CARE

Subject:

**Absent Day Policies –
Maintaining the Continuity of Care**

Continuity of Care Policies	Description & Requirements
Fill-the-Gap – Maintain Parent's Eligibility	<p>If the family is in transition from one assistance program to another, basic eligibility may be temporarily jeopardized. CCR&R Eligibility Specialists may extend a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship to the end of the benefit month in an effort to maintain continuity of care to bridge the gap between programs.</p> <p>⇒ Case note the period of transition and the need for care during the transition.</p> <p>EXAMPLE: A TANF Cash participant finds employment after TANF benefits are issued for the month. The parent needs child care to begin work. Since the new job was not prospected at the time TANF Cash eligibility was prospected, a dependent care disregard is not immediately available. A Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship may be provided to fill-the-gap when a family transitions out of the TANF Cash program.</p>
Grace Period – Maintain Parent's Eligibility	<p>When a parent loses employment, eligibility for the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship is jeopardized. The purpose of the Grace Period is to support the parent's effort to look for work while maintaining continuity of care for the child(ren) and to stabilize the relationship with the child care provider. The Grace Period allows the current Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship to continue for 30 days following the job loss, based on the date the employment change occurred (not the date reported to the CCR&R).</p> <p>Additionally, if the family experiences a reduction in child care hours, the grace period allows current child care arrangements to continue for 30 days.</p> <p>EXAMPLE: A family may request a lower co-payment because work hours have been reduced yet they still meet the minimum work requirement. If the grace period is granted, child care hours may be maintained for 30 days to ease the transition to fewer child care hours. This provides time for the parent and provider to make necessary adjustments in the care arrangement.</p>

Montana Department of
Public Health & Human Services

Section:

Serving the Family

CHILD CARE

Subject:

Absent Day Policies –

Maintaining the Continuity of Care

Continuity of Care Policies	Description & Requirements
	<p>If the parent reports the employment reduction or job loss to the Child Care Resource & Referral within ten days, the parent may apply for a <i>Grace Period for Child Care Assistance</i> (DPHHS-HCS/CC-016). The grace period may be granted or denied, by the CCR&R Eligibility Specialist, depending upon the circumstances indicated on the ‘Grace Period’ application. All of the following restrictions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The parent shall report the job loss, or reduction in employment hours, to the CCR&R within ten days. ❑ The parent shall apply to extend the child care scholarship on the <u>Change Report</u> form (DPHHS-HCS/CC- 016). ❑ The parent shall demonstrate good cause for losing employment or employment hours. ❑ The parent shall be looking for employment. ❑ The CCR&R Eligibility Specialist has the discretion to grant or deny the grace period based on the good cause evaluation. ❑ While one purpose of the grace period is to maintain child care arrangements; the Eligibility Specialist has the flexibility to adjust the child care schedule so the parent can look for work. <p style="padding-left: 40px;">EXAMPLE: After losing a job in which they worked the graveyard shift, a parent may need daytime child care for job search activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Only one grace period may be granted per job loss; grace periods may not be granted consecutively. ❑ There is no explicit limit to the number of times a parent may use the Grace Period. However, the CCR&R Eligibility Specialist has the option of denying the request based on the apparent misuse of the benefit. <p>When a parent is approved for the grace period: ⇒ Re-determine eligibility.</p>

Montana Department of
Public Health & Human Services

Section:

Serving the Family

CHILD CARE

Subject:

Absent Day Policies –

Maintaining the Continuity of Care

Continuity of Care Policies	Description & Requirements
<p>►</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Issue a new certification plan that ends 30 days following the work reduction/job loss. ⇒ If the parent finds a job before the Grace Period expires; prospect and verify eligibility. Redetermine eligibility in CCUBS and set up certification plans as if the parent has just completed a recertification process. ⇒ Case note the new eligibility information and any need for a schedule change. ⇒ The CCR&R Eligibility Specialist completes the <u>Change Report</u> form (DPHHS-HCS/CC-016) and mails it to the Early Childhood Services Bureau. <p>If the parent does not return, the certification plan will serve as notice that the Child Care Scholarship ends. No overpayment will be due.</p> <p>Eligible parents using the grace period for the Non-TANF Child Care Scholarship may receive one month of TANF Cash benefits while seeking employment to regain eligibility for the Non-TANF Scholarship. Two specific limitations apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The parent shall have new employment starting before the end of the grace period, which maintains their Non-TANF eligibility. ❑ The parent's TANF Cash case will close when the Non-TANF grace period ends. <p>If the parent's TANF Cash case does not close at the end of the grace period, the family will lose eligibility for Non-TANF child care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ The WoRC Case Manager may refer the family for child care. ⇒ Upon referral, the CCR&R may open the family on TANF child care.
Jury Duty –	A parent's eligibility for a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship may be

Montana Department of
Public Health & Human Services

Section:

Serving the Family

CHILD CARE

Subject:

Absent Day Policies –

Maintaining the Continuity of Care

Continuity of Care Policies	Description & Requirements
<i>Maintain Parent's Eligibility</i>	<p>interrupted when they are called to jury duty. All of the following restrictions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The parent must be receiving a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship when the jury selection occurs. <input type="checkbox"/> There is a need for child care during jury duty. <input type="checkbox"/> The parent must report the jury duty as soon as possible, but within 10 days. <input type="checkbox"/> The parent's current employer shall verify that the parent can return to their job following jury duty. <p>If jury duty extends for more than 30 days, the CCR&R shall assess changes due to the jury duty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Verify the parent's continuing participation in the jury. ⇒ Verify the need for child care. ⇒ Verify that the employer is keeping the job open for the parent. ⇒ Prospect eligibility using the family's current circumstances. For example, the family's income may be lower due to jury duty. ⇒ Adjust the child care certification plan to manage the time committed to jury duty. ⇒ Income and co-payment adjustments must be managed prospectively.
Maternity Leave Not Covered, Unless . . .	<p>Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarships are not available for normal maternity leave. However, one of the following policies may apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Enrollment; <input type="checkbox"/> Hold-the-Slot; <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Emergency; or <input type="checkbox"/> Suspending a Case.
Medical	Parents who meet activity/work requirements may receive a Best Beginnings

Montana Department of
Public Health & Human Services

Section:

Serving the Family

CHILD CARE

Subject:

**Absent Day Policies –
Maintaining the Continuity of Care**

Continuity of Care Policies	Description & Requirements
Appointments – <i>Meet the Parent’s Need for Child Care</i>	<p>Child Care Scholarship when they leave work to attend a medical appointment. Additionally, if a medical appointment requires child care and is necessary to increase the parent’s ability to work, a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship may assist the parent with child care during the appointment.</p> <p>EXAMPLE: A parent is recovering from injuries sustained in a car accident. The initial ‘medical emergency’ has passed and the parent has returned to work. While the parent does meet the work requirement, they are not yet working full time because of physical limitations. Initially, the parent attends physical therapy sessions for two hours every morning before going to work. Subsequently, physical therapy sessions taper off and work hours increase. A Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship may be used during the physical therapy sessions.</p> <p>EXAMPLE: A parent must take a child who has siblings to a medical appointment. The cost of child care will be covered for the siblings who are not attending the medical appointment.</p>
Medical Emergency – <i>Maintain Parent’s Eligibility</i>	<p>A parent’s eligibility for a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship is jeopardized when they fail to meet their work requirement during temporary, unforeseen interruption due to a parent’s or their child’s medical emergency. All of the following restrictions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The parent must be receiving a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship when the medical emergency occurs. ❑ There is a need for child care during the medical emergency. ❑ The medical emergency involves the parent or their child. ❑ The medical emergency must be unforeseen. ❑ The parent must report the medical emergency to the CCR&R within ten days of beginning of the medical emergency. Exceptions to this reporting requirement shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. ❑ A physician shall verify the parent is unable to care for the child(ren) during the medical emergency.

Montana Department of
Public Health & Human Services

Section:

Serving the Family

CHILD CARE

Subject:

Absent Day Policies –

Maintaining the Continuity of Care

Continuity of Care Policies	Description & Requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The parent's current employer shall verify that the parent can return to their job following the medical emergency. ❑ Medical emergency Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarships are limited to three months. <p>EXAMPLE: Maternity problems (not a normal pregnancy) may constitute a medical emergency:</p> <p>The CCR&R shall assess changes due to the medical emergency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Request a physician's statement to verify the individual's condition. ⇒ Verify the need for child care. ⇒ Verify with the employer that the parent intends to return to work. ⇒ Prospect eligibility under the family's current circumstances. For example, the family's income may be lower due to the medical emergency. ⇒ Set up child care for the periods of time when the parent cannot care for her child(ren) because of her medical condition. ⇒ Use 'Medical Emergency' as the reason for care. ⇒ Issue a new child care certification plan to manage the medical emergency period (3 months, or less). ⇒ When the parent returns to work, re-determine eligibility. ⇒ If the medical emergency is managed retrospectively, income and co-payments cannot be changed retrospectively.
Refer Back to "Issuing the Child care Certification Plan"	<p>Maintaining continuity of care may involve redefining the intent of the current child care certification plan or issuing a new child care certification plan. Refer back to Issuing the Child care Certification Plan as outlined in Section 6-3 for additional policies, which may be useful when setting up a new certification plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Parent is Unavailable; ❑ Sleep Time;

Montana Department of
Public Health & Human Services

Section:

Serving the Family

CHILD CARE

Subject:

**Absent Day Policies –
Maintaining the Continuity of Care**

Continuity of Care Policies	Description & Requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Split Shift; or<input type="checkbox"/> Study Time.

